

counc



Expression of Interest Housing Over Carparks



EOI open date -1 December 2020

EOI closing date – 31 January 2021

(a) INTRODUCTION

Byron Shire is located on the far north coast of NSW, we share our boundaries with the Tweed, Lismore and Ballina Local Government Areas. Brisbane is approximately 200km north and Sydney approximately 800 kms to the south. Our shire is 556 square km in size and our region is famed for its rural beauty and beaches. According to the 2016 census, the population was 31,556.

Housing affordability is a key issue for Council and our community. Council has a long held and long term commitment to strengthening and supporting our diverse community with appropriate housing and by demonstrating strong leadership. We are currently investigating a number of [housing affordability initiatives](#) in this space.

As part of these initiatives, Council is actively exploring ways of working effectively with the State Government to increase the supply of Affordable Housing within the shire via innovative and flexible planning provisions. We continue to support an inter- governmental approach to address the housing challenges facing many residents of Byron, the Northern Rivers and Australia more generally.

As well as focusing on advocacy and partnership, Council is exploring how its own assets can be used for Affordable Housing and thus far, this has been through looking at its vacant or unused land. This initiative will explore the use of airspace above Council carparks to establish affordable, low cost and accessible housing.

(b) BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In February 2020 Council considered a [Mayoral Minute](#) to support, in principle, housing above Council owned carparks. It was resolved (20-069) that Council:

1. *Support, in principle, facilitating the establishment of diverse, lower cost, and accessible housing on Council owned carparks, without decreasing the current number of available car parking spaces and having regard to the need to avoid negative impact on recent investment in emissions reduction capability.*
2. *Extend an invitation to housing providers to a preliminary session to ascertain requirements, possibilities and challenges for establishing housing above Council carparks, and that:*
 - a) *This session is to be a 'without prejudice' discussion prior to any activation of a more formal EOI process;*
 - b) *Council provides for internet based attendance.*
3. *Prior to this meeting, create a list of possible sites for discussion and consideration.*

The EOI process has been delayed and re-scoped due to COVID-19. It is now proposed to follow these steps to progress the resolution:

- Step 1.** Initial call for expressions of interest to registered housing associations or charitable organisations to submit a five minute video submission pitching ideas or examples for a mixture of affordable housing types above Council owned car parks similar to examples included in the [Mayoral Minute](#).
- Step 2.** Council staff identify possible sites for discussion and consideration.
- Step 3.** Council staff to investigate possibilities and legal impediments for leasing the space above Council owned carparks identified in Step 2.

- Step 4.** Invite registered housing associations or charitable organisations, who submitted an expression of interest, to a preliminary session to ascertain requirements, possibilities and challenges. Remote attendance will be available.
- Step 5.** Report the outcomes above to Council to determine if the project and a formal expression of interest should be progressed.
- Step 6.** To be determined by Council resolution. If Council resolves to continue to investigate housing over car parks, issues including funding and a formal EOI process will be determined.

This initial expression of interest is Step 1 in this project.

Affordable Housing developments would most likely comprise a range of housing across the Affordable Housing continuum, and be available to people with a range of incomes (between the very low to medium income brackets).

(c) OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

Using our land to facilitate the creation of housing provides a high level of influence and control, providing some great possible outcomes:

1. It can ensure Council chaperones environmentally sustainable design (ESD) principles into designs to reduce energy use for future residents of the building.
2. It can help improve the wellbeing of people in a low income household by providing opportunities for people to live within their existing community even when they can no longer afford the private rental market or if they need to downsize from a family home.
3. It can facilitate cultural diversity, and support for housing for our local indigenous mobs.
4. It can enable low income workers to live close to where they work.
5. Affordable and social housing developers face significantly higher land costs today than in the last three decades. Land typically constitutes between 10% and 30% of development costs (Urbis 2011). By providing land for a nominal fee, affordable housing provision is more possible. The value and therefore cost of land within the Byron Shire makes it difficult for non-profits to develop social housing. Council leasing its land to non-profits for a nominal fee would eliminate this cost for housing providers.

(d) REQUIREMENTS

The Mayoral Minute provided examples of similar housing projects from Australia and overseas. The types of Affordable Housing (e.g. social housing, shared equity housing) that could be provided through the development will be explored through the EOI process. The mixture of Affordable Housing types that can be provided is influenced by financial viability, available funding sources, different housing needs within our community and wider planning models to ensure diversity and a healthy interaction with the wider township.

Registered housing associations or charitable organisations wanting to express an interest in this project must supply a five minute video submission pitching ideas or examples for affordable housing above Council owned car parks.

Based on the video submitted, suitable providers will be invited to participate in the preliminary session to ascertain requirements, possibilities and challenges.

All information should be sent to kgrainey@byron.nsw.gov.au If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kylie on 02 6676 7220 (Monday to Wednesday)

(e) TIMELINES

Video submissions should be submitted to Council no later than 4pm on 31 January 2021.

Responding to this will not result in any commitments.